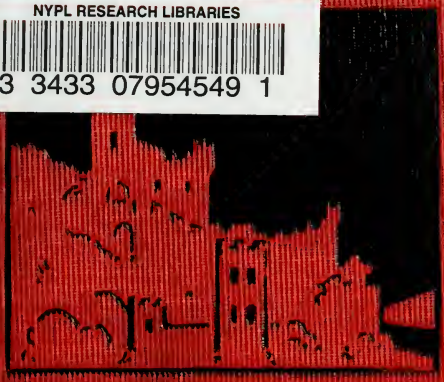

THE CRYSTAL PALACE

THE CRYSTAL PALACE

AND OTHER LEGENDS

RETOLD BY

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PREFACE

Legends have a fascination for all classes of people, but they possess a peculiar charm for children. They constitute, in fact, a form of literature particularly fitting to the mental world of the child. In them fact and fancy are happily blended. Around the bare facts of recorded or unrecorded history, are woven the poetic ideals of a romantic people.

Nothing could be more worth a child's reading than a story of the past that conveys not only an idea of the everyday life of real people, but represents them also as striving after ideals in various forms of beauty.

No influence is greater than the moral force of beauty. In the present volume the purpose of the writers has been to pre-

sent only such legends as reveal simplicity, strength, and beauty. These qualities make their inevitable appeal to the child fancy.

The subject matter of the book has been graded for children of eight or ten years. It is, therefore, well suited for use as a supplementary reader in the fourth or fifth grade.

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THE CRYSTAL PALACE

MANY, many years ago there lived in the village of Zurdorf, a queer little old woman. She was a very kind old lady and a good nurse. Often she was called upon to care for the boys and girls of the village.

They quite enjoyed being ill because she knew so many interesting stories. She told them of great knights and ladies, of castles and fairies, of the wood nymphs and the water sprites; but best of all was the story of old Father Rhine.

One night as she sat knitting, a knock came at the cottage door. She opened it and there stood a strange man, carrying a lantern of curious pattern. He did not speak, but motioned to her to follow him.

The night was dark, and the rain was

pouring down in torrents. Great pools were found in the streets. Aunt Margot, as the children called the old lady, hesitated to follow the stranger. It was not, however, because she was afraid of the storm, but because the man was a stranger.

He motioned to her again. She saw that his face was kindly, and so decided to follow him. Down the dark street they passed, splashing through the deep pools of water.

Suddenly the water became deeper, and began to eddy about Margot's ankles. She became frightened and was about to turn and flee.

"I can go no farther," she shouted; "what manner of man art thou, and whither wouldst thou lead me?"

The old man did not answer, but caught Margot in his arms and plunged into the river Rhine. It had risen from its banks, and its eddying waters had frightened Margot.

Down, down, through cold green waters

they sank. It seemed to Margot as if she were going down forever. She closed her eyes and ceased to struggle.

At last they seemed to have passed out of the water, and Margot opened her eyes. She found herself in a wonderful crystal palace. Precious stones glittered all about her. The ornaments were of silver and gold. As soon as she had recovered from her wonder, she was led into an immense chamber. Here on a bed of crystal, with silken coverings, lay a beautiful golden haired nymph, who was ill.

"I have brought you here," said the old man, "to care for my beautiful wife. Nurse her tenderly back to health, and you shall never regret it."

The lovely nymph was so good to look upon that old Margot took great delight in caring for her. She tended her so gently and so faithfully that the golden haired lady improved rapidly. She was soon quite well.

In soft whispers she told the old nurse

that her husband was a mighty water spirit. Mortals called him Father Rhine. She had lived on the earth and was the only daughter of the Lord of Rheidt.

One day when she was at a village dance, there appeared before her a strange man. He was clad in foamy green. He asked her to tread a measure with him. Round and round they whirled until they reached the water edge. Suddenly he plunged with her into the stream, and brought her to the crystal palace, where he made her his happy wife.

"And now, kind nurse, we must soon part," said the beautiful lady. "When Father Rhine offers to reward you, accept from him only your usual fee, no matter how much he urges you to take more. He loves honesty, but loathes greed."

Just then Father Rhine appeared. Seeing his beloved wife quite well again, the river god beckoned to the nurse to follow him. He led her through many halls of the great castle. Finally they came to his

treasure chamber. Here all around lay great heaps of gold, silver, and precious stones.

The water god was very grateful to the good nurse for saving his wife; so he bade her help herself. The old woman gazed upon the jewels longingly. How well she could use them to help the poor! She remembered, however, what the beautiful golden haired lady had told her. So she selected only a small fee such as she always received. The mysterious man urged her to take more, but she firmly refused.

Then the great water god took her by the hand and led her through a long dark corridor. Suddenly she found herself again in the cold water of the Rhine. Slowly he rose with her through the dark flood. Up and up they went until she found herself, dripping but safe, on the shore near her own house. As he beckoned adieu to her, Father Rhine flung a whole handful of gold into her lap. Then

he plunged into the river again and was gone.

Ever since that time the little people of the village have loved to hear of the wonders of the crystal palace beneath the flood. So the good nurse tells it over and over again. And she never forgets to show the handful of gold which, she says, is the same Father Rhine gave her.

THE ANGEL PAGE

A HANDSOME lad once sought a brave and noble knight, asking leave to serve him as page. The knight was greatly charmed by the graceful manners of the young lad, and was pleased with his unusual request. He granted the lad's prayer, and never once did he have cause to regret it.

The little page did every duty with great cheerfulness and skill. He was so devoted to his master that he was able to foresee almost every wish. It was not long before he had won his master's love, and the two became constant comrades.

The years passed swiftly by. The knight had never before been so happy, and never so successful. Everything seemed to turn out just as he wished it.

Nothing had gone wrong since the day that the little page had entered his gate.

One day as the two were riding along the banks of the Rhine, they noticed a band of robbers coming toward them. These men had often sought to harm the good knight. The band was so large that it was easy to see that the brave knight could make no headway against them. There seemed to be no way of escape.

"Would to God," cried the brave man, "that you were safe within my castle walls, my faithful little page! We are lost, my lad, but we must sell our lives as dearly as possible. Let us die like heroes. Do you get behind me, my page, and, if possible, I bid you flee."

"My dear master," replied the little page, "follow me. I will show you a way to escape. Follow me."

The page put spurs to his horse and galloped along the river bank. Suddenly he turned the unwilling steed directly into the rushing stream.

"Rash boy, come back!" called the knight, dashing forward with the hope of overtaking the daring page. "Better die fighting bravely than perish miserably in the river. Come back, my page, come back!"

"Have no fear, my dear master, but follow me," still cried the little page.

The sound of his voice rose so confidently above the noise of the wind and waves that the knight obeyed, hardly knowing what he was doing. A few minutes later the horses had found a firm footing in the river. Guided by the faithful little page, the knight safely forded the stream. He reached the farther shore just as his enemies came down to the water's edge.

The angry robbers urged their steeds into the deep water, but no trace of ford could be found and they were forced to give up the pursuit.

The knight's love for the little page was greatly increased after this, and the

little page, too, seemed to love his master more and more. He was only happy when in his master's presence or when doing some errand for him.

A short time after this happy escape from death the knight's beautiful wife became suddenly ill. The knight loved her as he loved his own life, and was in great sorrow for fear that she might die.

Many wise doctors were called to her bedside, but they could do nothing. They declared that there was only one thing that would cure her—the milk of a lioness. That could not be obtained because there were no lions in the country.

The rumor of this strange remedy spread rapidly through the castle. It came to the ears of the faithful little page. He at once sprang to his feet and rushed out of the hall. An hour later, before any change had taken place in the lady's condition, the page returned to the castle.

He went directly to the bedside of his mistress and sat down, flushed and pant-

ing. But in his hand he bore a cup full of the milk of a lioness, which was given to the patient at once. In a few moments the color crept back into the lady's pale cheeks. A new light came into her eyes and she sank into a sweet sleep. When she awoke she was fully cured. All her strength had come back, and she was very happy.

Then the good knight went to seek the little page. He poured out to him his thanks. He could not say enough to express what he felt for his faithful servant. He wished to know all about it.

"Tell me, my sweet, faithful page," he urged, "how you were able to get this remedy, which all my wealth could not procure."

"My noble master," replied the page, "I knew that a lioness was lying with her cubs in an Arabian den, and so I—"

"Arabia!" exclaimed the knight, interrupting the page, "Arabia! Did you find

your way there and back in one short hour?"

"Yes, my dear master," replied the little page, "that is the truth." And he fixed his beautiful, truthful eyes on his master's pale, wondering face.

"My lad, who are you then?" suddenly asked the knight, a nameless fear gnawing at his heart. "Who are you? Speak; tell me everything."

"Master, my noble master, ask not who I am nor whence I came," cried the little page, sinking down at the knight's feet, and raising his beseeching hands. "Do not ask me. Let me remain by your side, my good master. Remember that no harm has come to you since I have been in your service."

"My page, stop this pleading and tell me what I ask. Who are you?" continued the knight, paying no attention to the little page's beseeching look.

"A spirit, O my master, a spirit of light, who for you and yours left a home in the

realms above. But now I must leave you, my master. Farewell; farewell."

"Lad, lad, my sweet lad, leave me not. Stay with me still," cried the knight. "Ask what reward you please, but do not forsake me. Remain, my faithful little page, for I cannot live without you."

"You have asked me what I am and whence I came, and have mentioned a reward. The charm, my dear master, is broken, and now I must leave you. In return for the things that I have done for you so cheerfully and so lovingly, I ask you to place a silver bell in the midst of the forest. Its tinkling sound may guide many weary travelers and help them to find their way home. Dedicate the bell to God and to his angelic host, O master; and now receive my last farewell."

The little page suddenly vanished. No one saw him leave the hall nor pass through the castle gates, and no trace of him was ever found. The angel page had faded from mortal sight and returned to

his home above. He had gone back to live with spirits as good and faithful and pure as himself.

The knight at once had the silver bell placed in the forest. But he could not forget his faithful page. He sought for him everywhere, and when at evening the silver tones of the little bell rang out in the quiet air they seemed to him like the words of an angel, and filled his heart with restless desire.

The noble knight seemed to lose all interest in life. His strength began to fail; his step grew slow and feeble; and one day when the shades of night were falling and the first tinkle of the little bell came to his ear, he softly murmured "My page, my faithful little page"; and he went to live with the spirit he had learned to love so well.

THE GNOME'S ROAD

On the high hill above the Rhine still stand the ruins of an old Castle. Here Kuno Von Sayne once lived. Kuno was a very proud young man for he was a member of a very noble family.

He had fallen in love with the beautiful daughter of the surly old Lord of Faulkenstein. At last he succeeded in winning the love of the maiden, but of her father he had great fear.

After many months of hoping and fearing, he decided to go to the old Lord and ask for his daughter's hand. One beautiful morning he set out on his mission, to the Castle of Faulkenstein. This Castle was perched far up on the heights that rose above a small river.

It was a long journey, and he had al-

most lost his courage when he reached the place. However, he went at once into the presence of the Lord of Faulkenstein and boldly made known his wish.

The grim, old Lord looked at him long and closely, then in tones that were terrible to poor Kuno spoke.

"I will," he said, "consider the matter if you will promise to do one thing for me."

Without waiting to find out what he was to do, Kuno eagerly consented.

"Then," said the Lord of Faulkenstein, "you may wed my daughter on condition that you build a convenient road over the jagged rock to the village. You are to ride up that road on your war horse before sunrise to-morrow morning."

Poor Kuno was speechless. Nothing was to be said, for he knew how impossible was the task. Many months of hard labor would scarcely accomplish the great work.

Sadly he made his way down the rocks

again. He had not been able to catch even a glimpse of the fair Irmangarde, his beloved, so he sat down upon a rock in the valley and began to reproach himself for his stupidity.

Suddenly he was aroused from his thoughts by a small voice calling to him.

"Kuno, Kuno Von Sayne," it said.

He looked up and there before him stood the King of the Gnomes.

"Despair not," said the kindly little man. "Myself and my subjects will gladly help so good a knight; so away to the inn where you left your steed. Before sunrise to-morrow morning the road shall be ready."

At this the King of the Gnomes waved his hand. A great mist rose and covered the hill and valley with its dense vapor. Thousands of dwarf-like creatures now sprang out of the ground on all sides. They began using axes, hammers, and spades with great good will. All night long Kuno Von Sayne heard the crashing

of great forest trees, and the breaking of stones. Now and then he heard a loud rumble like thunder; there was a continual clatter and crashing throughout the whole night. At dawn he came from his room, and was greeted by the inn-keeper.

"A great storm must have raged over the valley last night," said the latter. "I was kept awake all the night by the noise."

Kuno did not pause to listen to the man's tales, but loudly called for his horse. He mounted and rode rapidly away to the foot of the mountain. Far above him loomed the Castle of Faulkenstein. How Kuno's heart leaped with joy. There, indeed, was a road leading up to the Castle. True to his promise, the King of the Gnomes had built a broad, convenient road through the forest and over the rocks. Kuno galloped boldly up, exchanging smiles with the kindly dwarfs who peered at him from behind every rock and tree. From the ramparts of the Castle, stepped the beautiful Irmangarde.

Kuno dashed over the arched bridge the dwarfs were just finishing and greeted her gaily. The dwarfs raised a glad shout of triumph. The Knight of Faulkenstein was awakened by the shout. He looked out, and there, stretching far out from the Castle, saw the newly built road. He thought he must still be dreaming, and rubbed his eyes again and again.

When, however, he saw the beaming face of Irmangarde and Kuno, he knew that he had been outwitted. So as the first sunbeams fell upon the Castle, lighting up the gladdened heart and blushing cheeks of the maiden, Kuno claimed her as his bride. The Lord of Faulkenstein was proud to accept a man who could do such wonderful things as Kuno had accomplished during the night.

THE LORELEI

COUNT LUDWIG was the only son of the Prince Palatine. He lived with his father in the castle at Stahleck. The young count had heard many marvelous tales of the beautiful Lorelei and he determined to go in search of her.

One evening he stole from his father's castle to sail down the Rhine. He hoped to catch a glimpse of the Siren Lorelei. The stars were twinkling softly overhead, and the bark slowly drifted down the river. Darker and darker grew the waters as the bed of the Rhine grew narrower. But the young count did not notice this. His eyes were fixed on the rocks far above, where he hoped to see the beautiful nymph.

Suddenly he saw a shimmer of white drapery and golden hair. At the same time he heard the faint, sweet sound of

an alluring song. As he drew nearer, the melody became more distinct. The moonbeams fell upon the maiden and seemed to make her even more beautiful. She bent over the rocky ledge and beckoned him to draw nearer.

The count and boatman were spellbound by the vision above them, and they paid no heed to the vessel. Suddenly the boat struck against the rocks and went to pieces. The men struggled against the swift current, and all escaped except the young count. Him the Lorelei took down to her magic palace below the river to be her lover forever. Many different stories about the young count's fate were related by the men who escaped.

The Prince Palatine was deeply grieved over his only son's death. He blamed the beautiful Lorelei and longed for revenge. Finally he sent for one of his greatest warriors.

"You are to capture this wicked creature who has caused so much woe," he

said. "Take a band of armed men and post them at once all around the rock, so that the nymph cannot escape."

The great warrior did as he was commanded. At the head of a band of armed men he climbed noiselessly up the moonlit cliff and presented himself before the charming Lorelei. There she sat, as usual, combing her golden hair and crooning her matchless song. The men hemmed her in on all sides. They left no mode of escape except by the steep descent to the river.

"We command you to surrender," said the captain of the band.

The nymph made no reply, but gracefully waved her white hands. The grim old warriors suddenly felt as if rooted to the spot. They could neither move nor speak.

There they stood motionless with dilated eyes fixed upon the Lorelei. They saw her remove all of her jewels and drop them one by one into the Rhine beneath

her feet. Then she whirled about in a mystic spell, chanting her magic tunes. They could understand nothing of it except now and then a word about white-maned steeds and pearl shell chariots.

When the song and dance were ended, the waters of the Rhine began to seethe and bubble. Higher and higher they rose, until they reached the top of the cliff.

The petrified warriors felt the cold tide surge about their feet. Suddenly they saw a great white-crested wave rolling rapidly toward them. In its green depths they beheld a chariot drawn by white-maned steeds. Into this car the Lorelei sprang and quickly vanished over the edge of the cliff into the river.

In a few moments the angry waters had sunk to their usual level. The brave warriors discovered that they could move once more. They rubbed their eyes and looked about them. No trace of the sudden rise except the water drops along the

face of the cliff could be seen. These shone in the moonlight like diamonds.

The Lorelei has never since then appeared on the cliff. But boatmen have often heard the faint sweet echo of her alluring song, wafted toward them on the summer breeze at midnight. It is said that she remains in her beautiful palace and gardens below the green Rhine, enjoying the companionship of her earthly lover.

THE SUNKEN CITY

THERE was once, we are told, a fine tract of land where now roll the waves of the Zuyder Zee. On the very spot where now the fishermen anchor their boats and fish, there stood a beautiful city. It was protected from the sea by great dykes.

The name of the city was Stavoren, and the people who lived there were very wealthy. Some of them were so wealthy that they laid their great halls with floors of gold and silver. But in spite of their wealth they were selfish, thoughtless, and hard hearted. For the poor people they cared nothing.

The richest person among them was a maiden lady. She had palaces, farms, ships and counting-houses—everything that one could desire. But she thought of nothing except how she might increase

her store. With this in mind she one day summoned the captain of her largest vessel.

When he came she bade him sail away to procure a cargo of the most precious things of earth, and to return within the year. Not knowing exactly what she wished, the captain questioned her, but she simply repeated her order and sent him away at once.

The captain set sail from Stavoren without knowing where he was going. After leaving the harbor he called his officers together and asked their advice. Each had a different opinion as to what were the most precious things of earth.

The captain was plunged into greater doubt than ever. He thought over the question for many long hours, smoking his pipe and scratching his head. At last he said to himself that nothing could be more precious than wheat, which is the staff of life.

Accordingly he purchased a cargo of

grain, and returned happily to his native town, arriving long before the year had passed. The haughty lady had in the meantime told all her friends that her vessel had gone in search of the most precious thing of earth. She would not tell her closest friend what that most precious thing might be. So everybody was very curious.

When one day her captain appeared suddenly before her and told her that he had brought a cargo of wheat, her pride vanished. She flew into a terrible rage and commanded that every kernel be cast into the sea at once. The captain was shocked at this order and plead with her to allow him to give the wheat to the poor. She repeated her command.

"I will come down to the port myself," she said, "to make sure that every kernel is cast into the sea."

The captain made his way sadly back to his vessel. As he did so he met several beggars by the way and told them that a

cargo of wheat was to be cast into the sea. By the time the lady reached the dock the poor had gathered there from all parts of the city, hoping to secure some of the grain.

When the lady approached, many imploring hands were extended toward her, but all was in vain. Angry and proud, she made the sailors cast all the wheat into the sea. The captain, powerless to prevent this sinful waste, looked on in quiet rage. When the last kernel had disappeared beneath the water he turned to his haughty mistress.

"As surely as there is a God above us," he exclaimed, "you will be punished for this sin. The time will come when you, the wealthiest person in Stavoren, will long for a few handfuls of this wasted wheat."

The lady listened to his words in haughty silence. When he had finished, she took a costly ring from her delicate hand and cast it into the sea.

"When this ring comes back to me," she said, "I will believe what you say and fear that I may come to want."

A few hours afterward the lady's cook was preparing dinner for her. He was opening a large fish which had just been brought from the sea, when to his surprise his eyes fell upon the costly ring. He immediately sent it to his proud mistress. When she recognized it she turned very pale.

Shortly afterward there came a report that one of her counting-houses had been ruined, and another report of disaster came that same evening. All her counting-houses were ruined. Her fleet had been destroyed at sea; her palaces were burning; and her farms were laid waste by storms.

In a few hours everything that she had possessed was stripped from her. The palace in which she lived burned down during the night, and she barely escaped with her life.

Now she was desolate, indeed! The rich people of the city cared nothing for her now that her money was all gone. The poor people whom she had treated with contempt allowed her to die of hunger and cold in a miserable shed.

The city of Stavoren did not profit by the sad end of the haughty lady. The rich people continued to enjoy life and to neglect the poor. It did not matter to them what happened to their wretched fellow creatures. They, like the haughty lady, were truly selfish.

As time went on the sand began to increase in the port, so that it was soon impossible for ships to come to anchor. It grew worse and worse. The waves washed the sand up until a great sand-bar rose above the waters and all further commerce was stopped. It was not very long before the sand bank was covered with little green blades. The people gazed upon it in surprise.

"It is the Lady's Sand," they declared.

"For it is the wheat that she had cast into the sea that is growing there."

The wheat grew very rapidly, but bore no fruit. It did not matter to the rich even if traffic had ceased. They did not suffer. The poor, however, were greatly distressed, for they now had nothing to do. They besought help from the rich, but their prayers fell upon deaf ears.

Not long afterward a little leak was discovered in the dyke which protected the city. Through this the sea water crept into the city reservoir, spoiling all the drinking water.

The rich people only laughed, saying that they would drink champaign, since water was not to be had. But what were the poor to do? They crowded around the gates of the rich, imploring a sup of beer, but were rudely driven away.

"It would be a good thing," said the rich, "if these wretched creatures should actually die. Of what use are they to themselves or to any one else?"

The rich of Stavoren had had their last chance to do good. That very same night when the revelers had returned to sleep, the sea broke down the weakened dykes. Bursting in, it covered up the whole town.

Over the spot where Stavoren once stood the waves now glitter in the bright sun light or plunge and dash when the cold winds come sweeping in from the sea.

Boatmen come rowing up from the desolate little fishing town which now bears the name of the ancient city. When the waters are smooth they rest upon their oars to point out far beneath them the spires and turrets and palaces of Stavoren.

The streets of the old town as it lies beneath the waves, once so populous, are deserted. The market place is empty. No sound is to be heard except when some inquiring fish, swimming through the belfries, strikes one of the bells with his tail. Then there is heard a sad sound which seems to be tolling the knell of the sunken city.

THE BIRD OF PARADISE

THERE once lived in the monastery at Heisterbach a kindly monk, of great learning and simple manners. He had studied for many years that he might settle some doubts that troubled him.

He had observed that people grow tired of even the best of things. They desire to behold new scenes, to hear new music, and to taste new dishes.

"I wonder if it will be so in Heaven," he said to himself. "Shall we not grow weary of beauties and joys of Heaven in the endless flow of ages?"

This question perplexed him sorely; but he was unable to answer it to his satisfaction. Wearied with the doubt, he decided to put it away from him if possible. So one beautiful sunny morning in sum-

mer he turned his steps toward the woods that stretched away for miles back of the monastery.

It was such a morning as makes one glad to be alive. Silvery clouds were floating like great white ships across the blue sky. The gentle breeze was playing among the branches of the trees. Flowers were blooming and birds were singing happily everywhere.

Earth seemed to breathe forth peace and joy for all mankind. Beauty and blessing were everywhere. Yet, with all this to gladden him, Alfus was not satisfied. His heart was not at ease.

"Alas!" he sighed, "how all is changed! The rapture with which I first looked upon this lovely scene, is gone. The beauty with which it once greeted me is no more. Why must it be so?"

As Alfus was pondering on this thought he wandered on, paying no attention to the path he was following. Hour after hour passed and still he walked on, until finally

he became weary and decided to rest. He sat down on a mossy bank and began to look about him.

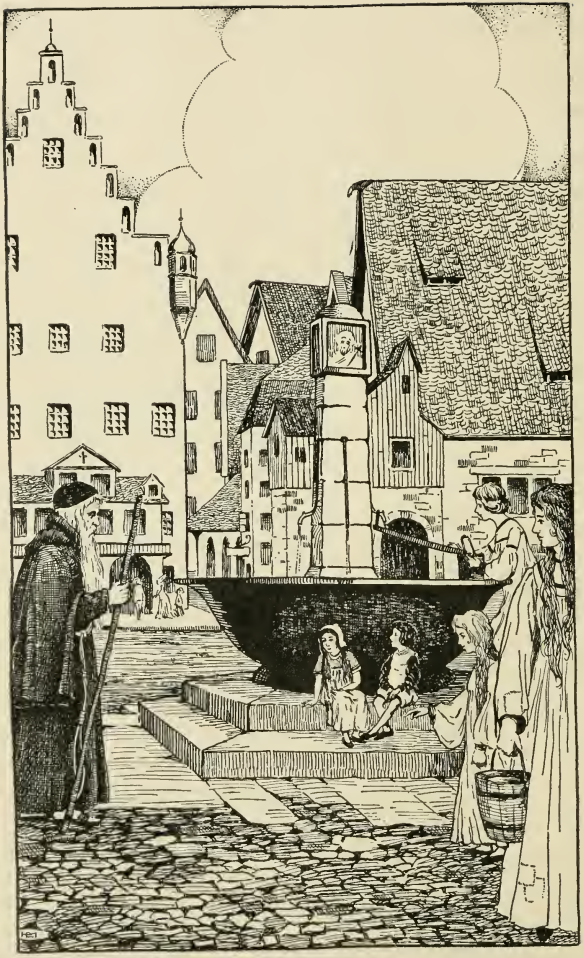
It was a beautiful spot, and one which he had never visited before, although he thought he was familiar with every place in the forest. The trees were tall and leafy. The branches stretched out forming beautiful arches above him. At his feet were delicate ferns and wild flowers of many different colors. He heard the drowsy hum of the bee and saw a beautiful butterfly flitting about from flower to flower.

His admiration was awakened. It seemed as if he saw a new beauty in the things about him, and he forgot that he was tired. Suddenly there came to him the song of a bird which seemed to be the sweetest he had ever heard. He looked and saw the bird perched upon a tree nearby. It seemed to pour forth its song in one strain of perfect happiness. It seemed so thrilling and so beautiful that

Alfus could not think it earthly. With intense delight the monk leaned back against the mossy bank, listening to the strain. The song lasted but a moment and ceased as suddenly as it had begun. Alfus desired to hear it again. He looked for the bird, and waited, but it was gone. Around him all was silence. Even the breeze seemed to have ceased its rustling among the leaves of the trees. The monk slowly rose and began his way back through the woods to the monastery.

But how everything seemed to have changed. Could it be that he was in a part of the woods he had never visited before? He, too, did not seem to be the same. His steps were now halting and slow, and all his body seemed feeble and stiff. As he looked at his beard he saw that it was gray.

He walked on in amazement. The trees seemed to have become much larger since he had entered the forest. Even the bushes had grown into tall trees. He



wondered if he were dreaming or if he had lost his mind.

Slowly and painfully he picked his way back through the dense forest, and after several hours of walking came to the open land. Eagerly he looked up to the monastery, but that too had changed. It was older and grayer than before and seemed to have increased in size. A new portion had been added, and the entrance gate was not the same which had stood there when he left in the morning. Everything looked older.

What could have happened? He had been gone but a few hours, yet all the world had changed. It seemed as if he were in another century. Alfus passed his hand across his eyes as if to clear his sight and anxiously walked on. As he passed the fountain at the village he saw some women washing, but they were new to him; yet he had known every man woman and child for miles around. Whence had these strange faces come?

"Look," cried one of them as the old man passed by. "This ancient monk wears the dress of the order, yet his face is new to me; I have never seen him before. Who can he be?"

To this strange remark Alfus paid no heed. He only hastened on the faster. He was beginning to doubt his senses. He went directly to the gate of the monastery. But this was much larger than it had been when he had left. He rang the bell. The sound was no longer the same. The silvery peal of the bell he had known had given place to the harsh clang of a much larger one.

At length there came a young monk to open the door. Alfus was amazed. It was a stranger—a man whom he had never seen before. He gazed at him speechless.

"What has happened," he said. "Why are all things so changed? Where is Brother Antony? Why does he not open the door as usual?"

"Brother Antony!" exclaimed the monk. "There is no such person here. I am the porter, and no one but me has opened this door for the last twenty years."

For a moment poor Alfus stood on the threshold as if petrified. Then he beheld two monks slowly passing along the corridor. They, too, were strangers, but he reached forward and clutched one of them by the gown.

"Brethren," he cried in agony, "I beseech you speak. Tell me what has happened. Only a few hours ago I left the monastery for a quiet walk in the woods, and now when I come back, behold, all is changed. Where is the Abbot? Where are my companions? Is there no one here who remembers Alfus?"

"Alfus—Alfus," repeated one of the monks thoughtfully to himself. "There has been no one of that name here for a hundred years. There was once a man by that name in the monastery, but he disappeared long ago. I remember hearing

about him when I was a small lad, but whether the story is true or not, I cannot tell.

"He went one morning, as was often his custom, to walk in the forest alone," the monk went on, "and they never heard from him afterward. The monks sought for him throughout the forest day after day, but no trace of him could be found. He seemed to have vanished from the earth. The Abbot thought that God must have borne him up to Heaven in a chariot of fire like Elijah. He was a very holy man, indeed. But all this happened so long ago, that it may be simply a story."

At these words a sudden light seemed to shine in the face of poor Alfus. He sank to his knees and clasped his trembling hands as if in prayer.

"Now I understand, O God, that a thousand years are but as a day in thy sight. A whole century passed while I held my breath to listen to the song of

the bird—the bird which sings at the gate of Paradise. Forgive my doubts, O Lord, and grant that I may enter into thy rest."

As the monks looked at Alfus they saw that a great calm had settled upon his face. A radiant smile played about his lips. He sank back gently upon a settle and the wondering monks crowded about him, but to their astonishment he did not move, and when they looked more closely they saw that his pure soul had flown away to his Heavenly mansion, there to enjoy endless ages of unchanging happiness.

THE BELL OF ATRI

In olden times there lived in Italy a kind-hearted king. He was sorry for any trouble that came to his people, and did all he could to make them happy. Because of his goodness the people called him Good King John.

"I wish all of my people to be just," said the king. "And I wish every one to be treated justly."

Not all of his people were as good as King John himself. Many did wrongs to their neighbors. And the neighbors complained to the good King.

"I will set up a great bell in the market place," said the King at last. "If any one is wronged, let him ring the bell. He shall have justice."

So the King had a large bell set up in the market place, where any one could

ring it. Then he appointed a good judge to right the people's wrongs.

Many people rang the bell in the years that followed. All received justice and went away happy. The bell was used so much that the rope was worn away little by little. At last it became so short that many people could not reach it. Then some one fastened a piece of grape vine to the rope.

Now, there lived in Atri an old Knight. In his younger days he had loved to hunt, and had kept many horses and dogs. Now he could hunt no more, and so sold all his horses except the one he had liked best.

It happened that the old Knight began to think of nothing but money. He wished to be very rich.

"What is the use of keeping this one horse?" he asked himself. "He does nothing but eat and sleep. It costs too much to keep him. I will turn him out to look after himself."

So the faithful old horse was turned out into the street. It was in the dry, hot summer, and there was little grass to be found. The horse wandered about under the burning sun, getting a bite here and a bite there.

In his wandering he came finally to the market place. He saw the vine hanging to the bell rope.

"These leaves," he thought, "are better than nothing, though they are withered."

He began to pull at the withered leaves. The very first pull set the great bell to ringing loudly. The poor horse was so hungry that he paid no attention to the ringing. He kept on eating, and the bell rang louder and louder.

The judge heard the sounds, and wondered who was ringing the bell so loudly. He put on his robe and hurried to the market place.

He was greatly surprised when he saw who had rung the bell. He felt sorry for the poor creature, however.

"Even the dumb beast," he murmured, "shall have justice. This is the horse of the Knight of Atri."

A large crowd of people had gathered in a few minutes. They told the judge the story of the old horse. Their stories, however, did not agree. The judge, therefore, decided to call the Knight himself.

The heartless old Knight said that the horse was useless to him, and that he could not take care of him any longer. It cost too much money.

"Did he not always do his duty by you?" asked the judge. "Did he ever refuse to carry you to the hunt, or to bring you safely home?"

The old Knight had to confess that the horse had always been faithful.

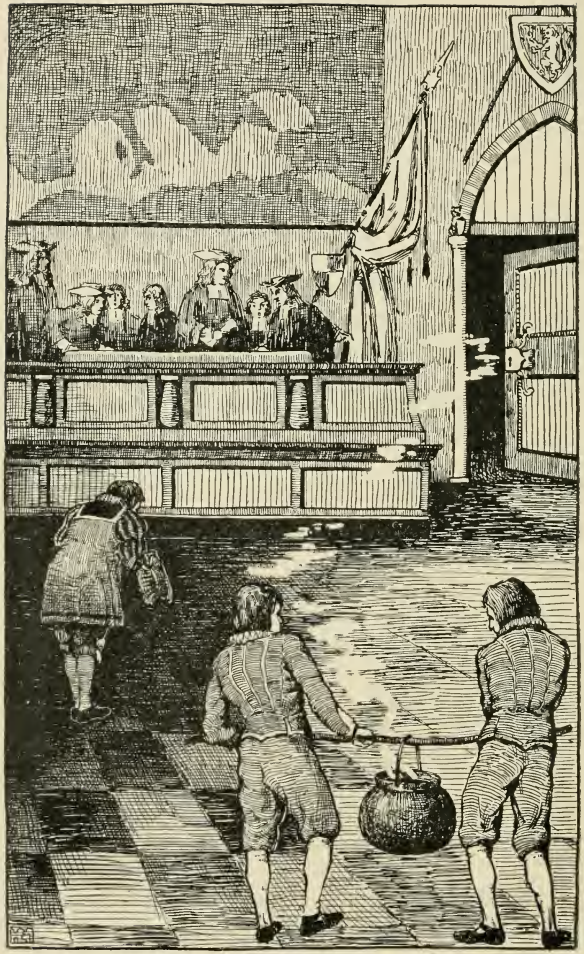
"The law decides, then," cried the judge, "that you shall provide him shelter and food as long as he lives."

At this decision all the people clapped their hands and shouted loudly.

The old Knight ordered his servant to lead the horse back to the stable. The people followed, cheering, because even a dumb animal could get justice.

The fame of the bell of Atri spread abroad through all Italy.

To-day people know very little about the other things that Good King John did. They simply remember him as the king who set up the bell of justice at Atri.



THE POT OF HOT PORRIDGE

In the beautiful land of Switzerland is a little town named Zurich. Not far from here is the larger city of Strasburg. The people of Zurich had long looked with envy on the larger city and wanted to become a part of it. At last they decided to send an appeal to the magistrates. This they did, but the great magistrate of Strasburg bluntly refused the honor of such a union.

"Zurich is of no importance," they said, "and besides it is too far away to be of any help in time of need."

When the councilors of Zurich heard the Strasburger's answer, they were very angry, indeed. They even talked of challenging the great magistrates.

"No," said the youngest of the Zurich

councilors, "I will make them eat their words. I pledge you my honor that I shall bring you a different answer before long."

The other councilors were glad to be relieved of the matter, so they agreed and returned leisurely to their dwellings. The youngest councilor went home in a great hurry. He went at once to the kitchen and selected the biggest pot there.

"What are you going to do with that?" asked his wife.

"You will see," he replied. "Fill it with as much oatmeal as it will contain and cook it as quickly as possible."

His wife wondered much at this strange command, but she bade her servants build a roaring fire. This they did and soon the great pot of oatmeal was cooking. Then such a time as they had stirring the oatmeal to keep it from burning.

In the meantime, the youngest councilor ran down to the quay and prepared the swiftest vessel. He collected a number

of the best oarsmen and when all was ready, bade two of them accompany him home.

He sprang breathless into the kitchen. The oatmeal was ready.

"Come boys," he cried, "lift the vessel from the fire and run down to the boat with it."

He followed them closely and saw it placed in the boat. Then, turning to the men, he exclaimed,

"Now, lads, row with all your might. We are bound to prove to those stupid old Strasburgers that we are near enough to serve them a hot supper in case of need."

Aroused by these words, the youths bent to the oars. The vessel shot down the Simwat, Aar, and Rhine, leaving town, village, and farms in its wake. Never did it stop once till it reached the quay at Strasburg.

The councilor sprang ashore and bade the two youths follow with the huge pot. He strode into the council hall and had

them set it before the assembled magistrates.

"Gentlemen, Zurich sends you a warm answer to your cold refusal," he exclaimed.

With open mouths the Strasburgers gazed at the still steaming pot. When the young Zuricher explained how it got there they laughed heartily. They were so amused with the wit and promptitude of their neighbors that they voted at once to grant their request.

The papers for the alliance were signed and sealed. Then the great magistrates called for spoons and ate every bit of the oatmeal. They called it excellent, and it proved hot enough to burn more than one councilor's mouth.

Ever since then this huge iron pot has been known as the "pot of alliance." It has been carefully kept in the town hall of Strasburg, where it can still be seen.

THE SILVER BELL

In the ancient city of Speyer, there were in olden times two great bells. Neither one of these was ever rung by human hands, but it is said that an angel came down from Heaven at night to ring one of these bells whenever a person died.

One of the bells was of iron. It was rung whenever the soul of a sinful person took its flight. The other bell was of pure silver. It had been placed in the tower by a baron. He had erected it with the understanding that it should never be rung until there came a person who really loved his fellow men.

When this bell was erected it was muffled by many bands, so that it could give forth no sound until it had been placed carefully in the tower.

It was agreed also, that if no person

who truly loved his fellow men should be found within the space of thirty-three years, the bell should forever remain silent. It was to be a witness against the unkindness of men.

The thirty-three years were now almost completed, and no one had been found in the whole country of whom it could be said that he unselfishly loved his fellows. Many kind deeds had been done; many brave and noble services had been performed; but when examined closely, there always seemed to be some selfish motive behind them.

The people of the valley had looked longingly day after day at this bell, and had hoped and prayed that some one might appear for whom the bell could be rung. All longed to hear its silver sound. It was said to give forth the most enchanting music. But the summers and winters came and went.

The young people who had seen the bell placed in the tower had grown old. They

had waited and waited, and hope began to sink in their hearts. They began to think that they should never hear the sound of the silver bell.

An awful pestilence broke out in the land. There was no one who knew how to save the wretched people. Gloom settled down over the whole city. It seemed to be threatened with utter destruction.

Again there were deeds of mercy done; again hearts bled with sympathy for their fellows; again people strove to find out someone who was truly unselfish in his charity. But upon examination it was found that people pitied their friends, and neglected their enemies. They wept for those near them, but were thoughtless of those whom they did not know. Fathers and mothers were brave to protect their own children, but careless about the children of other people. So, though there were many noble deeds done, it was found that they were not the result of a deep love for mankind in general.

During all this time the iron bell rang almost continually. It rang by day, and it rang by night, until hope and cheerfulness were gone, and despair and fear settled down upon every household.

The King of this land was a handsome youth, who had just come to the throne. He had always had everything that his heart could desire; and was not trained to bear hardships or to sympathize with the suffering of others. No one hoped to find comfort in him, or relief from despair.

At night, however, when the city was sunk to its fitful rest, this young king knelt in prayer for the poor and the wretched, and then rose to answer his prayer by his own hand. With food and clothes he loaded his horse and went forth alone through the city, disguised as a peasant.

Night after night he passed through the dark and wretched streets, carrying his treasures to distribute among the

poor. From evening until daybreak he labored alone to relieve the suffering of his people. Then as the last shadows fled he returned to his palace gate.

The people at last began to hope that a truly unselfish soul had appeared. They had, however, very little time to think of this matter or of the silver bell because of their wretchedness. The thought, however, that there was some one to care for them was a source of comfort to many. Joy was awakened in their hearts, and joy brought strength to them, until at last people returned to forge and field to perform their usual labors.

The man, however, who had come to them in their need had remained concealed. No one had found out or even suspected who he was. Many thought that an angel had come to them. Many others believed that it was the work of some good soul, and hoped to find out who it was. They began to believe that the silver bell might yet be rung.

At last they went to the king and besought him to issue a proclamation, in order that he might find out the person who had bestowed so many bounties upon them.

"Surely," they said, "a truly unselfish soul has been among us, although we know not who he is."

"My good people," replied the king, "be contented. Should it not be enough that God has sent his servant to you in the hour of your need?"

"This king," they murmured, "in his wealth and power, enjoying the blessings of youth, has not known what we have suffered, and therefore cannot appreciate our gratitude. While we were starving in our hovels, he was sitting in his castle, quaffing wine. We can expect nothing from him."

"At least," clamored others, "let the great bell be rung, for the thirty-three years are now almost over. We shall

never hear its notes of gladness unless it be rung today."

"No," replied the king still, "but if you will, go and pray that the Lord may send His angel down to ring the bell, if in His perfect knowledge he sees a being who is worthy of the honor."

That night many people waited before the church, praying that God in His goodness might send a spirit from on high to ring the silver bell.

The night slowly passed away, and lo, the sun's first rays were just about to come up over the mountains. Suddenly the sun seemed to pause; the dusk continued. Then there came, as it were, a splendor from the clouds, the brightness of which rested on the church and its tower. The waiting multitude all looked up in astonishment. The bell began to peal. It sent forth its angelic notes—notes such as no human being had ever heard before. The waiting people were

enraptured. It seemed to them as if all the Heavenly Host were singing for joy.

The song of the bell was of peace and good will toward men. The sounds echoed and re-echoed among the mountains, and were borne away to the farthest valleys.

Just as the first light of the sun peeped up over the horizon, the splendors faded from the tower and in their stead there appeared the figure of a man clad in light. Across the tower there seemed to be a row of letters. The people looked up and read: "Behold, the man who loved truly his fellow men."

Then everyone fell to his knees, for there stood the figure of their King. Their hearts died within them, when they remembered how harshly they had spoken of him: but they rejoiced at the same time to know that it was he. They all rose up and went in haste to honor him whom they had scorned of late.

When they reached the palace gate,

however, they were not permitted to enter. The angel who had rung the bell had entered the palace before them, and had taken away with him the imperial soul that had unselfishly loved his fellow men.

THE TWO BAKER BOYS

MANY, many years ago the people in Germany lived in little towns with high walls around them. They built walls around their towns because they had quarrels with other towns. The walls protected them against their enemies.

Sometimes people kept bee-hives on the high walls. The bees could fly away into the fields outside and gather honey. There were not many flowers inside the city to get honey from.

One morning two baker boys were hungry. They had to get up very early. Some fine rolls had just been taken from the oven. The boys thought it would be fine to have some rolls and honey.

"Let's go up on the walls and get some honey out of one of the hives," said John.

"But the bees will sting us," answered James. "Besides the watchman on the walls might see us. Then we would be in trouble of another kind."

John, however, persuaded James to go. The two boys stole out of the shop, and ran across the street.

In a few minutes they were creeping up the stairs that led to the top of the wall.

There was no watchman to be seen. He had gotten sleepy probably, and had gone somewhere to rest. But there was a noise coming from somewhere.

The boys listened, but all was quiet again. They made their way quietly along the wall till they came to the hives.

Then they covered their faces and got ready to rob the bees of their treasure. John was just lifting the top from one of the hives, when he heard another strange noise. He dropped the hive hurriedly.

The noise seemed to come from the outside of the wall. The boys looked over,

and saw a small army. It was the people of Linz, who had come to attack the town.

Both boys were terribly frightened at first. They saw, however, that something must be done to save the town.

"James," said John, "you run yonder and ring the bell. I will tumble the bee-hives down on their heads."

James did as he was told. John pushed a hive over the wall. It fell on the leader's head and went to pieces. The bees were angry at being disturbed in this way. They flew at the men and stung their hands and faces, so that they were glad to run away.

Another bee-hive came tumbling down and then another. And the angry bees put the whole army to flight.

By this time the bell had called the people out to defend the town. But the army had already departed. The two boys and the bees had saved the town.

The boys were not punished. Instead the people praised them for their wise

acts. It was decided to erect a monument in their honor.

One of the boys afterwards became mayor of the city. The other was long known as the most famous baker of his time.

THE EMPEROR'S WOOING

THE little town of Caub is very old. Above it in olden days rose the Castle of Gutenfels. Here many years ago lived Philip, Count of Faulkenstein and his only sister, Guda. This brother and sister were orphans, and lived together there happily.

Many suitors had come to seek the hand of the beautiful Guda, but she was happy in her brother's love and wished no other. Often Pihlip urged her to choose a husband from among the many wooers.

"My dear sister," he said, "the time may come when I shall have to leave you. War may break out at any time."

"I have no desire for any love or protection except yours, my dear Philip. I have never seen anyone as yet who has made me wish to leave you."

Count Philip and Guda used to be a great deal together; where one went the other went, too. So when the great tournament was held at Cologne they set out together to see it. The tournament was attended by a large number of knights. One of them seemed to be greatly attracted by Guda's beauty. He had won all the prizes in the contest, and yet remained unknown to everyone except the bishop.

The manners and conversation of the unknown knight pleased everyone, and especially the Count of Faulkenstein. So much was he charmed by the bearing of the victorious knight that he invited him to visit his castle at Gutenfels. This invitation the knight eagerly accepted.

Philip and Guda welcomed him warmly and were very much delighted with their new friend. The stranger's admiration for Guda became more and more plain; day by day he grew fonder of the beautiful girl.

"I should delight in lingering here forever," he said at last.

This, however, could not be, for there was a great war in Germany. The Emperor had died leaving no heir, so there were many who claimed the right to the throne. Richard of Cornwall had most supporters. Many of the nobles had declared for him, and were ready to take up arms in his behalf.

Among those who departed for the war was Philip Faulkenstein. He set out, leaving behind him his guest, who promised to follow within three days, to fight by his side.

"Before I go," he declared, "I must receive a certain message."

Two days later the message came. In the meantime the knight had won Guda's love and her promise to wait for him until his return. So Guda was left alone in the Castle of Gutenfels. Many hours she spent thinking about her absent lover and wishing for his return.

At last the war was ended and her brother came back, yet Guda was not happy. She began to grow anxious, for she had received no tidings from her knight.

Weeks passed by. The anxious days stole the color from her cheeks. At last she withdrew to her chamber in sorrow, for she was sure that her knight was dead. She did not even wish to appear when the new Emperor, Richard of Cornwall came to visit her brother at the castle.

When the Imperial Guest came he was clad from head to foot in heavy armor. He refused even to raise his vizor.

"I have come," he said, "on a personal errand. I have often heard of the great beauty of your sister Guda and I wish to make her Empress."

Philip was overjoyed at the prospect of such a happy marriage for his sister. Joyfully he bore the Emperor's offer to her.

"Alas, my brother," she said, "it is im-

possible for me to accept the Emperor's love; mine belongs to another."

When her reply was carried to the Emperor, he listened calmly, without the least sign of displeasure.

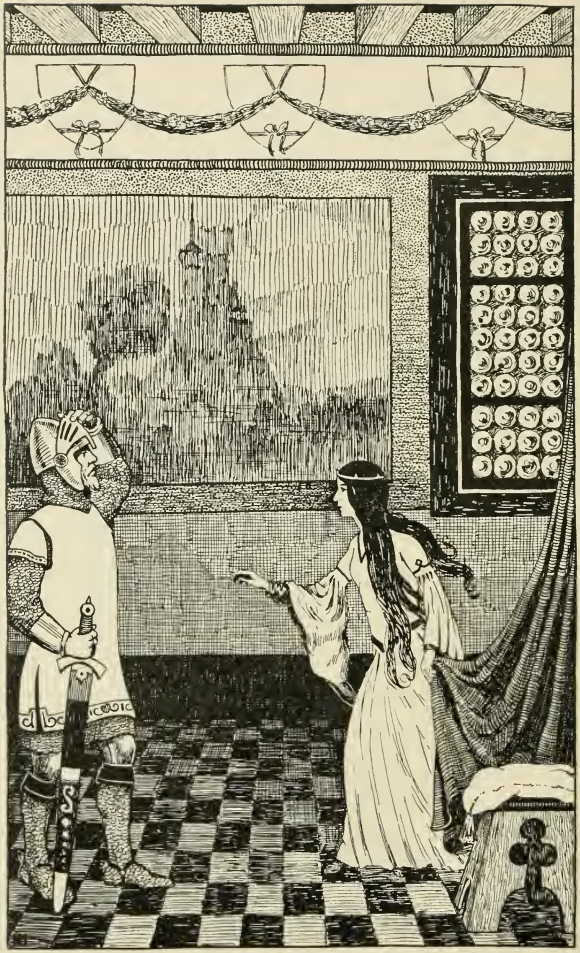
"May I," he said, "have the pleasure of beholding the lady? Perhaps I may be able to win a more favorable answer."

With vizor still lowered, and speaking in muffled tones, the Emperor addressed Guda.

"Why, fair lady, do you refuse the suit of your Emperor? Forget your former lover; he is either dead or faithless."

"Sire," she replied, "you do me the greatest honor in the world, yet can I not accept it. I must remain true to him to whom I have given my love. He may be dead, but I am sure he is not faithless."

At this the Emperor threw up his vizor and clasped Guda in his arms. As she looked into his bright face, she recognized him who had won her love as a simple knight.



She no longer refused to listen to his suit. Soon afterward she married Richard Cornwall and became Empress of Germany.

THE MAGIC RING

CHARLEMANGE was king of France and emperor of Germany. He had married a beautiful eastern princess, whose name was Frastrada. His love for her was so great that his only thought was to give her happiness. All wondered at his devotion, but none suspected the cause.

Frastrada had a wonderful gold ring. On it were inscribed mystic signs. Frastrada wore the ring continually, and it was this magic talisman that had worked such a charm.

But the new queen did not long enjoy her power. A great illness overtook her. During this time she thought often of the magic treasure and feared it would pass into other hands. So she slipped the ring from her finger into her mouth and quietly breathed her last.

The Emperor was quite overcome with grief. He refused to have the queen taken to the cathedral, but stayed constantly by her side.

In vain the councilors and courtiers plead with him. In vain Turpin, the prime minister, told him that the people had need of him. He refused to leave the chamber where the queen lay, or to partake of food. At last he fell asleep at his post.

Turpin felt convinced that the queen possessed some charm, so he stole noiselessly to her bedside. After some time he found the ring. He concealed it in his own clothing, and sat down to wait for Charlemange to awaken.

Soon the Emperor opened his eyes. He turned from the queen with a shudder.

"Turpin, my faithful friend!" he cried, as he threw himself in the arms of the prime minister. "Your presence is like balm to my wounded heart! You shall remain by my side forever!"

From that time on, Turpin was forced to accompany Charlemange wherever he went. The courtiers wondered at Turpin's influence. Many of them were quite jealous. As for poor Turpin, he was wearied beyond all expression. He could find no rest either by night or by day. Vainly he sought for some plan by which he might rid himself of the troublesome gem.

At length it happened that Charlemange and Turpin set out from the palace of Ingelheim on a journey to the north. They camped one night in a great forest. While his master lay asleep Turpin left the camp and wandered out into the moonlight alone. Not once before, since he had found the ring, had he been free from the Emperor.

His heart swelled with a feeling of relief as he plunged into the pathless forest. On and on he wandered, trying to think of some way to rid himself of the trouble-

some ring. Like Frastrada, he did not want anyone else to come into possession of it and thus get such an influence over the Emperor.

After long wandering he found himself at the opening of a beautiful glade. Before him lay a quiet pool embosomed in the dark woods. The moonlight flooded the retired spot and shone like silver over the deep and quiet waters.

Turpin was lost in admiration. He sat down on a stone and feasted his eyes in silence on the peaceful beauty of the scene. Soon the thought of the magic ring came to disturb his happiness.

"What shall I do with it?" he groaned.

He drew it from its hiding place in his breast and examined it closely.

"Ah!" he muttered, "what is this I see?"

He noticed by the pale light of the moon that the ring bore something else beside the strange signs. On it was the image

of a tiny swan. He looked at it in amazement; for he had never seen the swan before.

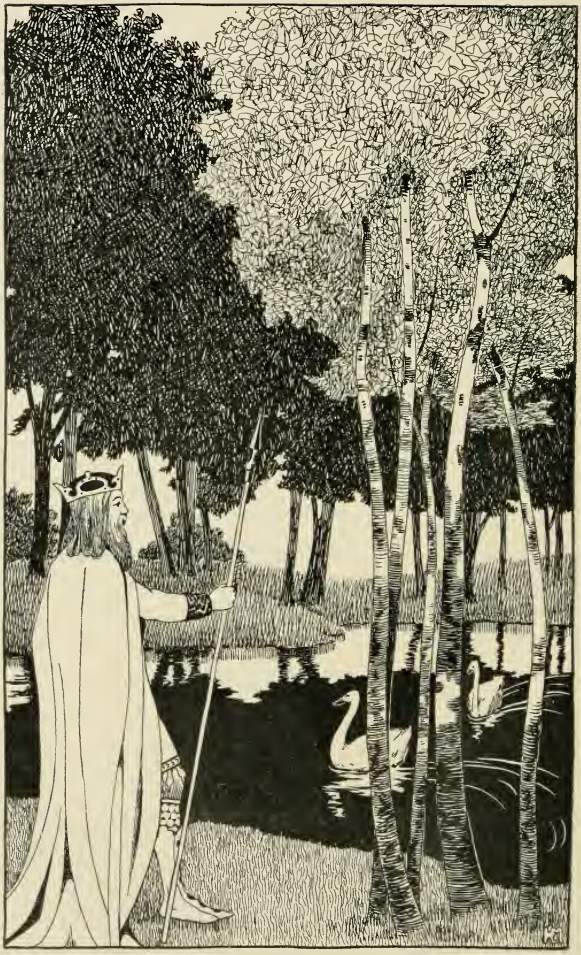
He started up, then stopped suddenly.

"Why not?" he asked himself. "Those deep and quiet waters would soon close over and conceal the ring forever."

A moment later the jewel flashed beneath the rays of the moon. A slight splash was borne along by the night air. Ever widening ripples broke the mirror-like surface of the pool. In the distance a snowy swan appeared sailing with stately calm over the ruffled waters.

Delighted to be rid of the hateful jewel, Turpin now made his way back to the tent. Charlemange was awake and greeted him as in the days of old. The charm was broken.

The morning sun rose bright and clear. The Emperor, however, became restless. He proposed that they tarry in the spot another day and hunt in the forest. Turpin agreed, and soon the forest echoes



were awakened by the clangor of the hunting horns.

A royal stag was started from covert. Closely the huntsmen and hounds followed it. At last, panting and exhausted, it was brought to bay in a remote glade, —the very place which Turpin had visited the night before.

Charlemange had been foremost in the chase all the morning. Now he sat motionless in his saddle, gazing in spell-bound admiration at the sunny stretch of water. He observed the reflection of the blue sky, and the swans gliding over its smooth surface.

"Ah! how beautiful!" he exclaimed. "I would fain linger here forever."

Then he dismounted and threw himself down upon the smooth grass by the edge of the pool. There he remained in dreamy content all day long.

At last the shadows began to lengthen. The glow of the setting sun was reflected in the miniature lake. Charlemange was

so enchanted with the scene that he vowed to build a castle there. The vow was kept, and the structure that arose was the beginning of Charlemange's capital and favorite city, Aix-la-Chapelle.

When many years had passed, death came to the great Emperor. He was laid at rest in the cathedral vault, not far from the spot he loved so well.

Strangers visiting Aix-la-Chapelle are told not to visit the magic pool by moonlight. At the mystic hour when Turpin dropped the ring into the quiet waters, the spell recovers all its former powers. Accordingly, should any one visit it at that time, his longing heart would always lead him back to the charmed spot, however far away he might be wandering in the wide world.

CHARLEMAGNE'S GENEROSITY.

CHARLEMAGNE had had a new palace built for him in a beautiful spot near the Rhine. When it was completed he went to visit it. The first night that he slept in the palace, a very strange incident occurred. An angel came and stood by his bedside.

"Arise," it seemed to say to him, "arise, go forth and enter secretly the house of Arnot."

The Emperor was so astonished at this command that he did not know what to to. He could scarcely believe that such an order could come from an angel, so he did not move, but the command was repeated, and then repeated again.

When the angel commanded him the third time to go and enter secretly the house of Arnot, he arose, went quietly to

his stable, saddled his horse himself, and rode silently out into the darkness, in the direction of the home of Arnot, one of his most trusted ministers.

As he was going along the dark way thoughtfully, he heard someone approaching, and he soon perceived that it was a knight clad in dark armor. Charlemagne could think of no good mission upon which a man could be riding at such an hour; so he challenged the man.

"Whither goest thou, and upon what mission at this hour of the night?" he demanded.

The knight did not answer, but put spurs to his horse and charged upon the Emperor. Seeing this movement, the Emperor did likewise, and the two met with a violent shock. Both were unhorsed, and in the hand to hand conflict which followed, the Emperor got the better of the unknown knight and brought him to the ground. With his sword at the throat of the knight he demanded his name.

"I am Elbegast," he replied, "a notorious robber knight, and have committed many a bold deed. Thou art the first that has had power to overcome me."

"Arise," said the Emperor, without telling who he was, "and come with me. I am on a mission like thine own."

Without hesitating, the robber knight joined his conqueror.

"I have vowed," said the Emperor, "not to return home until I have broken into the house of the Emperor's most trusted minister." So saying, he led the way to the house of Arnot.

Elbegast was not long in gaining entrance. Bidding his companion wait for him outside, he stole noiselessly into the house.

As he approached the bed room of the minister, the sound of voices in earnest conversation came to his ears. He listened, and heard the minister disclose to his wife a plan for the murder of the Emperor on the following day.

Forgetting the purpose for which he had come to the house, the knight made his way hastily back to his companion and besought him to go at once to Charlemagne and inform him of the coming danger.

"I, myself would gladly go to save the Emperor's life, but I would surely get into trouble, because of my many evil deeds, and more than likely the Emperor would not believe me. But whatever I have done, I hold great admiration for the man who has never been conquered in battle, and who has always worked for the good of his people."

Then Charlemagne and Elbegast parted, one returning to his stronghold in the mountains and the other retracing his steps slowly and thoughtfully to his palace.

On the morrow the ministers attempted to carry out the plot which they had formed against the Emperor; but their plans were thwarted. Charlemagne took

all of them into custody and they confessed their plot against him.

Charlemagne, however, was of a noble and generous nature, and pardoned all those who had conspired against him. This generosity on his part made them so ashamed of their plot that they vowed to serve him ever afterward with all true loyalty. And it is said that every one of them kept his promise faithfully.

Charlemagne then set his mind upon reforming Elbegast, and sent a messenger to him, requesting him to come to the palace.

"I, Charlemagne, Emperor of Germany," his message ran, "would speak privately with Elbegast, the robber knight, and promise him safe conduct to and from the castle."

Elbegast came to the palace in response to the request of Charlemagne, and was admitted to the private council chamber. Soon a man entered, clad in armor; and Elbegast recognized the knight who had

been his companion on the adventure to the house of Arnot.

"Elbegast," said Charlemagne, "you recognize me and yet you do not know me."

Then Charlemagne raised his visor, and the knight saw that he was standing in the presence of the Emperor.

"You have done me," went on the Emperor, "faithful duty, and I am ever in need of faithful servants, and offer you a place among my retainers. A man of your courage and skill is worthy of a place in the Emperor's service."

Elbegast was so moved that he could scarcely speak. Charlemagne was the only man who had ever been able to disarm him, and he therefore admired him greatly. More than this, the kindness of the Emperor appealed to him. Accordingly he willingly forsook his evil way of life and became a devoted follower of the Emperor.

THE SILVER BRIDGE

THERE was a spot on the Rhine near the little hamlet of Kempten that Charlemagne, the great Emperor, always loved. There the sun seemed ever to shine more brightly than elsewhere; there the air was balmiest; and there the quiet and peacefulness always calmed his spirit, and filled it with joy.

To this place he seemed always to come when he was worried with matters of state. When he returned from a journey or a war, he always paid his first visit to this lovely spot.

All his life long, this was the favorite spot of the great Emperor. He loved to see it by daylight, and he loved it by moonlight. Often did he wander there at night, when all the rest of the world was asleep. The green hills, the vineclad

slopes, and the pleasant glades were more soothing to him than sleep.

He even desired to be buried in this place, but his people would not have it so; and the great man was buried in state in the beautiful cathedral that he had built at Aix-la-Chapelle.

But even after death his spirit longed to visit the spot that had brought so much peace into his life. It is said that his spirit visits the place yearly in the late summer time, even to this day.

On the most beautiful moonlight night of all the year, people say, Charlemagne leaves his tomb in the great cathedral and comes to this quiet valley of the Rhine. He comes not to do harm, nor simply to rest and enjoy the place. His purpose is to bless the spot which was such a blessing to him during his life.

On the nights when Charlemagne's spirit visits the place, the silvery moonbeams may be seen to make a fairy bridge across the river. On this bridge the great

monarch's spirit passes across the Rhine.

He glides back and forth, bestowing his blessing on everything in the neighborhood. Every little village, every cottage, every hill and valley, the vineyards, the shore, and the great peaceful river itself —all receive his blessing.

Last of all he visits the palace which he built here and called Ingelheim, or Angel's Home. From here he returns to his rest again.

The people in this little valley are said to be more prosperous than those of any other locality along the Rhine. They are also more happy and more healthy. Their vineyards are always richly laden with beautiful clusters of grapes.

If at any time their vineyards do not bear, the people know that for some mysterious reason the spirit of Charlemagne failed to pay the yearly visit. They look forward, however, to the coming year, knowing that their harvest will be greater than ever.

The great spirit of the Emperor never fails them two years together. So century after century Charlemagne has bestowed his blessing on this country that he loved. On moonlight nights the people along the river will point out to you the silver bridge on which he passes back and forth over the river visiting blessing upon everyone.

THE PET RAVEN

Over the gate of the Castle of Stolzenfels is the figure of a Raven. It has been there for several hundred years. It was placed there in gratitude for the help a pet raven had rendered the Princess at a time when she was in great danger.

Othmar and Williswind were brother and sister. Since the death of their parents they had lived together in the beautiful castle, and had grown to love each other dearly. They were always together.

The time came when war broke out, and Othmar was called away. His going grieved Williswind sorely. Now she would have no one but the servants with her in the great Castle.

"My dear brother," she exclaimed, "what shall I do without you?"

"Sister mine," replied Othmar, "I grieve to leave you thus alone, but you know it is impossible for me to do otherwise."

Othmar took with him all the able bodied men. Only the old men, women and children were left at home to protect his sister.

In those days many lawless robber knights roamed through the forests, doing whatever pleased them. Afraid of these, Williswind ordered that the Castle gates should be kept closed all the time.

One evening as she sat in the great hall of the Castle with her servants about her, a trumpet sounded at the gate. The women stopped their spinning, and the men ceased their polishing of arms and armor. The Warder entered announcing that there was a pilgrim at the gate begging for shelter.

"Admit him at once," said Williswind.

In a few moments the Warder returned, accompanied by the pilgrim.

"Be welcome to our cheer, stranger. Such as we have we give freely," said Williswind.

"Thanks, fair lady, for your kindness," replied the stranger, glancing about the room.

The pilgrim was clad in worn garments, yet did not seem like a beggar. At times cruelty and cunning appeared in his face. Secretly he looked about as if to examine every part of the castle. His strange manner caused Williswind great uneasiness. The thought came to her that he might possibly be a robber knight in disguise.

In the morning, however, the pilgrim departed peaceably, and the young princess felt calm once more. The days passed quietly by and Williswind began to look forward to her brother's return. One morning the pilgrim suddenly returned, but not this time in pilgrims garments. He was clad in full armor, and came with a large number of followers.

"I come," he said, "to demand the hand of the Princess Williswind in marriage, and if she denies me I will take her by force."

"I beseech you," replied Williswind, "depart and leave me in peace. I have love for none but my brother, and desire only to be left here with my servants to await quietly his return."

But the evil knight only repeated his demand, saying that he would return in three days for an answer. If at the end of that time Williswind did not consent freely, he would take the Castle by force and carry her away.

What was to be done? Her brother was too far away to come to her aid. She decided, however, to send a message to him, asking him to come at once.

Knowing that it would be unsafe for the princess to remain in the Castle the old Warder persuaded Williswind to set out for a Convent, which was not many miles away.

The robber knight, however, had left spies all about the castle and the princess had not gone very far with her followers, when they were overtaken by the knight himself.

The servants with Williswind fought bravely, but they were soon overcome. The bold knight carried Williswind and her maid off to a lonely tower in the woods.

"Here I shall leave you," he said; "but I will return in three days to receive your answer."

Then he locked the heavy door, and left them alone. The two captives looked about for means of escape, but they found only thick walls and heavily barred doors and windows. All about them was nothing but wilderness, so they could expect aid from no passerby. Escape was hopeless.

They looked about the tower for food and water, but none was to be found. The unhappy girls sat and waited anx-

iously. They looked through the barred windows. The hours seemed days. Suddenly Williswind gave a cry of joy.

"Oh, look," she said, "yonder is my pet raven."

She whistled to the raven. It recognized her voice and came at once. She and Othmar had spent many happy hours together, teaching the raven to do various things. Among other things, it had learned to bring berries.

The bird at once seemed to understand everything, and went out into the woods. Soon it returned with a few berries. Back and forth it went during the whole day, bringing berries to the two hungry girls. The next day and the day after, it kept them supplied with this kind of food.

On the third day the robber knight reappeared. He felt sure that Williswind would by this time be ready to agree to accept him, but his hope was in vain.

The food which the bird had brought had increased her courage.

"Not for all the wealth of India," she said, "would I consent to your proposal."

Angrily the knight rode away, declaring that he would return again in three days more. The time passed very slowly in the gloomy tower. In spite of the raven's faithful visits, the girls became faint and weak from hunger.

On the sixth day Williswind was sitting at the window, watching eagerly for the bird's return. Suddenly she saw the figure of a knight come from the thicket. As she looked at him, she saw that it was not the robber knight; his armor was entirely different. Hope came to her at once, and she called out loudly and waved her handkerchief through the bars.

The knight heard the call and turned in the direction of the tower. Williswind uttered a cry of rapture; it was her brother. In his haste to reach home as

quickly as possible, he had taken this path through the forest.

Just at this moment the robber knight came riding up. Seeing Othmar he challenged him to fight. Down across the open space before the tower the two horses came, and met with a loud clash in the center. Othmar held his saddle, but the robber knight was stretched upon the ground.

Othmar was not a little surprised when he entered the old Castle to find that it was his beloved sister who had called to him from the tower. It was not long before Williswind was safe once more in the beautiful Castle of Stolzenfels.

Othmar was greatly pleased at the skill with which the raven had provided for his sister, so he adopted a new Coat-of-Arms, with the raven as his emblem, and set the little figure above the gate of the Castle, to tell to all the world the story of the faithful raven.

THE NIGHT OF THE STOLEN TREASURE

Little Hans and his mother were standing down by the Mummelsee. It was a big round sheet of water, surrounded by rocky slopes. On these grew dark pine trees, which cast their shadows far out into the water.

The water lay quietly sleeping in its dark bed. The stillness made little Hans thoughtful, and he crept close to his mother.

"Why is the water so still?" he whispered; "and the fish,—where are they?"

"Listen," answered his mother, "and I will tell you a story. There are no longer any fish in the Mummelsee; they left it many, many years ago. The place is haunted by Mummel, a great water god,

and by his daughters, the beautiful water sprites.

"Long years ago," the mother went on, "a man committed a great crime in order that he might get a rich treasure. In his flight he came to the Mummelsee. He could not swim across with the bag of treasure! What should he do? He knew that he would be caught unless he did something at once.

" 'Ah! I will just drop it into the edge of the lake,' he said to himself. 'The water is dark and no one will be able to find the Treasure. I will hide myself in the thick bushes, and there I will be safe also.'

"He crawled into the bushes where they were thickest. But something was wrong; the bushes seemed like so many hands, that caught hold of him, and held him fast. He could not move. He struggled and struggled, but the more he fought against them, the more firmly they held on.

"He gave up the struggle, and lay quiet, looking out upon the dark water. He saw something that was still more strange. What could it be? It looked like the form of a giant rising from the water. The face was sterner than any he had ever seen."

"What was it, mother?" asked little Hans; "was it a ghost?"

"It was Mummel, the great angry god, who haunts the lake. He had never allowed his peace to be disturbed in the slightest way. No one could throw even a pebble into the lake without being punished by him.

"Now he rose out of the water; and seized the frightened man. The bushes let go their hold on him as if by magic; and, without saying a word the stern god began to sink down, down into the cold, black water."

"Oh, cried Hans' "was the man drowned?"

"No answered his mother, "he was not

drowned. The great god drew him down, down to the bottom of the lake, where he has a wonderful palace. In it there are all kinds of strange creatures."

"But what does the man do down there? Is he still alive?"

"Yes; Mummel will not let him die; but keeps him, and makes him serve in the kitchen year after year."

"And does he not have any rest or any holidays?"

"He does not need rest down there, because he is no longer mortal like us. But once a year he ceases, for a single night, to serve in the kitchen. He becomes a mortal again and comes back to earth.

"Every year on the day on which he committed his crime, he puts on his earthly clothes and comes up. And when he reaches the world, he suddenly finds himself at the place where he stole the treasure.

"He hears some one coming, and starts to flee with the treasure on his back.

Each time, he comes to the same spot on Mummelsee, and throws the sack into the lake. Just as before, too, he tries to hide in the bushes and is caught and held by them.

"Every year Mummel, angry as before, comes up and drags the man out of the bushes, and draws him down to his palace again.

"Many people have heard the strange noises in the bushes along the shore of the lake. Some of them imagine, too, that they have seen a strange form rising from the waters. They declare that on this night the lake is greatly disturbed. The wind is loud, and the bushes bend their heads down to the very water.

"On the night when these strange things happen, people are careful to avoid the place. Although they like to go there at other times, they would not wish to be found there on the Night of the Stolen Treasure."

THE WATER SPRITES

MUMMEL, the great angry water god, has many beautiful daughters. These he guards jealously, and will allow no one to see them in their maiden forms except by the dim moonlight.

These beautiful water nymphs are not at all like their stern father. They are pure, and gentle and graceful and kind. They never do harm to anyone, and are not displeased if people come to visit the lake. Indeed they like to have people come to see them dance upon the water at night.

These lovely creatures would gladly help people if their father did not guard them so jealously; for they are kind-hearted and generous.

As it is, all they can do for mortals is to entertain them with their fairy dances

on the silvery waters of Mummelsee. On every moonlight night they can be seen flitting about on the surface of that.

Their fairy forms are so charming that people who see them cannot help forgetting their daily cares. People come to the lake tired and careworn in the evening, and go away happy and cheerful.

All night long, till the first streaks of dawn, the fairy nymphs can be seen, flitting charmingly from wave to wave. Their gowns are light and flowing like gossamers. Their beautiful golden hair, too, floats lightly on the gentle breeze.

Once or twice, it is said, daring youths have been drawn by their beauty, and have ventured into the lake to meet them. Every attempt, however, has been disastrous. Mummel has caught the intruder and taken him down to his abode below the lake. There the unhappy youth has had to act as a servant.

Whenever anyone attempts to come too close to his daughters, too, Mummel takes

away their human shapes at once. He transforms them into water lilies, and makes them stand with bowed heads along the farther shore of the lake.

Every morning, too, as soon as the first light of day begins to appear, the beautiful figures leave their fairy dance upon the lake. Mummel transforms them into their lily forms and makes them stand in the water along the shore.

So the beautiful water lilies which are to be seen in Mummelsee are the lovely water sprites, daughters of Mummel. No one is allowed to pick one even to this day.

THE GIANT MAIDEN

Many years ago there lived a mighty race of giants. They were as tall as the hills, and dwelt in great castles as large as mountains. To them the world was a very small place indeed.

These giants loved the world, however, and all the many beautiful things in it. The sunshine, the song of birds, the green fields, the woods, the rivers, and the blue sky were all charming to them.

So it was that they used to walk a great deal. They used to go everywhere and see everything that was good to see. When they walked, however, they stepped from hilltop to hilltop. They never went down into the valleys.

The king of the giants was a great and a good man. He was kind to his people, and kind to his children, and they all loved

and honored him. One of his children was a beautiful girl. She would soon be a woman, but she still loved playthings.

Like the rest of the giants, Hilda, the king's daughter, liked to go walking out into the world. She often found most interesting playthings. Sometimes she would bring home a bear, or a baby elephant.

One day Hilda went out for a walk. She had had to stay in the castle for several days because of the rain. This was a beautiful day, however, and she walked a long way, even for a giant's daughter.

The maiden stepped over valley after valley, from hilltop to hilltop, till she was far away from home. She had never gone so far before. The country seemed quite different, and it was pleasant, too.

At last she stopped and looked about her to enjoy the scene. Before her was a wide valley, and in it she saw many curious things. One of them was a man

plowing with horses. She had never seen anything like that before.

"Oh!" she cried, "what cute playthings they will make! They will be real live playthings, too. How nice the little creature is that walks behind! And the thing he is holding; that will make a fine toy. And the other animals will be such lovely pets. I must have them all."

Hilda reached down into the valley and picked up the man, the plow, and the horses, and tucked them away in her apron. Then she went home to tell her father.

"See what lovely playthings I have found!" she called to him, as she ran into the great castle.

"My darling child," said the good King, "these are not playthings. You must take them back and leave them where you found them. You must never touch them again. This is a man, and he has a wife and children at home. They will be very sad if he does not come back to them.

"By and by," he went on, "the whole world will be owned by little creatures like this man, and we shall be no more."

The King's daughter was very sad when she heard these things. She did not want to give up such delightful playthings. But she had a kind heart, and she loved her father. She knew, too, that he understood things much better than she did. So she put the man, the plow, and the horses into her apron again, and took them back to the place where she had found them.

The man was very happy when she set him down in the field again. His good wife, and his children were there, too; and they rejoiced to see him again. They feared something had happened to him.

The maiden looked on for a time, wondering about it all. It made her glad to see how happy the man and his wife and children were. She was no longer sorry that she had given up her playthings, and she went home with a light heart.

THE SWAN KNIGHT

ELSA was a very beautiful girl. She lived with her father, the Duke of Brabant. Her father loved her very much, so they lived happily in their lovely home. But one day Elsa's father died, leaving her all of his lands and castles. Then she had no one to care for her, and she was very unhappy indeed.

The Duke of Brabant had had a trusted friend, Frederick of Telramund. He undertook the care of Elsa; but he did not guard the lonely maiden as her father would have wished. Indeed, this man tried to force her to marry him, that he might obtain all of her wealth.

In vain the lovely Elsa declared she did not love him. In vain she appealed to his chivalry. He cared nothing for her tears, but cruelly cast her into a damp prison

close by the rushing river. There she must suffer in loneliness until she would obey the will of Telramund.

At last Elsa sent a long message to Henry I. begging him for aid. He decided that the matter should be settled in the lists. Elsa should choose a champion to fight with Frederick of Telramund.

Poor Elsa lost all hope when she heard this decision. She knew full well that no knight in the neighborhood would dare accept a challenge from Telramund; for Telramund had fought many times and had never been defeated. Day after day the herald sought someone to battle for Elsa's rights. It was as she had feared, no one answered the call.

Forsaken by all, the orphan girl turned to the helper of the helpless. Night and day she knelt in her narrow cell and prayed. In her great grief she struck her breast with the rosary clasped in her little hands.

The little bell attached to the rosary, gave forth a low tinkling sound. These silvery tones were very soft and faint. They could scarcely be heard above the roar of the waters rushing past the tower. But they floated out through the narrow window into the open air.

The winds of heaven caught up the sounds and whirled them rapidly away. Farther and farther they traveled, louder and louder they became. At last it seemed as if all the bells on earth had united to ring forth one grand deafening peal.

These loud and pleading tones reached even into the far distant temple on Montsalvat. Here King Parsifal and his train of dauntless knights kept constant watch over the Holy Grail. The King was greatly alarmed by the tones. He knew that some poor creature needed aid, and so hastened into his inner temple.

Within this holy place there stood a beautiful vase, giving forth its rosy light. On its bright edge the King read the mes-

sage from heaven. "Send Lohengrin to defend his future bride, but let her trust him and never seek to know his origin." These were the strange words which met the aged King's eyes.

The King immediately sent for his son. Lohengrin was a brave young knight. He had been trained to receive the messages of the Holy Grail with the most perfect faith. When he heard the words from his father, he put on his armor, spoke his farewells, and at once prepared to mount his waiting steed.

Suddenly sweet music fell upon his ear. He had never heard anything like it on land or sea. Soft, low, and sweet, it rose and fell and rose again. Then, in the distance, Lohengrin saw a stately swan come floating toward him. It drew behind it a little skiff. Nearer and nearer came the stately swan, clearer and sweeter rose the mystic strain. Both came to a pause close by the shore where the wondering knight stood.

Lohengrin sprang at once into the skiff. The swan took up its song again, and soon bore him out of sight.

The day for the tournament had dawned. The last preparations had been made. Many knights had gathered to view the scene. Yet not one dared to offer himself as champion for the lovely maiden.

Elsa clung to her prison bars. Tearfully she repeated for the last time her prayers.

"Send Thou the deliverer, O Lord!" she cried.

All at once her sobs ceased. The far away sounds of music fell comfortingly upon her ear. She looked out eagerly. There she beheld a spotless swan floating gently down the stream, skillfully guiding a little boat. In the boat a knight in full armor lay fast asleep on a glittering shield.

Just as the swan passed beneath the window where Elsa stood, the knight

awoke. His first glance rested upon her tear-stained face.

"Weep no more, fair maiden!" he cried, springing to his feet. "Fear naught! I have come to defend you!"

The skiff passed on down the river. The prison door opened, and Frederick of Telramund appeared to lead Elsa to the lists. A smile of triumph curled his cruel lips as he heard the herald give the last call for Elsa's champion. The sound of the trumpets died away and Frederick had turned to address Elsa. Suddenly a ringing voice came from the end of the lists.

"Here am I, the Swan Knight, ready to fight for the rights of the Princess. I will win her cause or die."

A cry of admiration arose from the crowd, as they turned toward the Rhine. There they saw a handsome knight, standing erect in a tiny skiff drawn by a swan. Spellbound they watched him. He sprang lightly ashore and sent the swan away.

It floated down the river and out of sight, giving forth its own beautiful, dreamy song.

For a moment Lohengrin knelt at Elsa's feet, making a solemn vow to save her. Then he mounted his waiting steed, drew down his visor, and took his place in the lists.

The struggle began. Breathlessly the knights and ladies watched it. Nothing could be heard but the clank of steel, the heavy breathing of the two knights, and the tramp of their horses feet. The dust almost hid them from view.

Suddenly a terrible blow was heard. The great frame of Frederick of Telramund was seen to sway for a moment in the saddle, then to fall and roll in the dust. In a moment Lohengrin had dismounted. He stood with one foot on Telramund's breast, ordering him to surrender.

Triumphant cries and joyful trumpets told of the victory. Cheer after cheer

rang through the summer air, as Lohengrin knelt before Elsa once more. The cries of the knights and ladies were loud and long. They almost drowned Elsa's sweet voice as she bade her champion rise and name his own reward.

Though the low spoken tones had been unheeded by the people, not one word had been lost by Lohengrin.

"Tempt me not, oh noble lady!" he replied. "Here at your feet where I would linger forever, I cannot but confess how much I love you, and how I hope some day to claim your hand."

The pretty flush on Elsa's soft cheeks deepened at these words. The long lashes drooped over the beautiful eyes. Timidly she held out her hand.

"You saved me, sir knight," she softly whispered. "I am yours!"

Not a word of this conversation had been heard by the people, for their shouts had been redoubled as the night bent low over Elsa's hand and pressed it to his lips.

Before night, however, Elsa's promise to become the knight's bride had gone abroad. Preparations for the marriage were begun at once.

Elsa had trembled with fear at the thought of a union with Frederick of Telramund, yet she did not hesitate in the least to give herself to the strange knight who had saved her. Nor did she doubt him when he told her that she must never seek to know either his name or his origin.

These must remain a secret from her and from all the people or they would have to part forever.

Many knights and ladies attended the marriage ceremony. The young Lohengrin and his lovely bride lived peacefully and happily for many years. Their love for each other grew deeper and better as one by one three beautiful children came to add to their happiness.

But Elsa, though perfectly content with her husband's unchanging love, could not

but notice that many of her people secretly doubted him. They tried many times, and in many different ways to discover his name and origin.

Little by little, she, too, began to wonder. The more she thought of it, the more she longed to know her husband's secret. Finally, as she was seated by him one day, she suddenly turned to him and asked the forbidden question.

"Elsa! Elsa! Is your faith dead?" cried the Swan Knight in broken voice. "Can you no longer trust me? I love you so, and now I must leave you. Our happiness is at an end! But, before I go, your question shall be answered. Come with me!"

His pale face and despairing glance brought Elsa to her senses. With a loving cry she flung herself on his breast, begging him to forgive and forget her question. He sadly shook his head.

"It is too late, Elsa," he replied, "too late! You have doubted me; and I must

leave you; but before I go you shall know all."

The knights had gathered in the great banqueting hall near the Rhine. They started up in surprise when their master suddenly came in their midst. He led the pale and weeping Elsa gently by the hand.

"Listen, oh, knights," he began. "The time has come when I must leave you. Before I go, it is right that you should know that I am Lohengrin, son of Parsifal, the great king. I was sent hither by the Holy Grail, to save your princess, Elsa, from Frederick of Telramund. Now the Holy Vessel calls me and I must go. Ere I depart, I ask you to watch faithfully over my little ones and to wipe away their mother's tears. Farewell!"

Then in the midst of the silence which followed these words, while he held Elsa in a last fond embrace, the low strains of the sweet music again came floating down the Rhine. A moment later the swan appeared.

Slowly Lohengrin tore himself away from Elsa's trembling arms. He sprang down the steps and into the waiting swan boat. Away it glided to the strains of sad music, and bore him out of sight forever.

THE END